

VZCZCXRO3568
OO RUEHCN RUEHGH
DE RUEHIN #0304/01 0780900
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 190900Z MAR 09
FM AIT TAIPEI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1159
INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 9024
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 0604
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 0076
RUEHCN/AMCONSUL CHENGDU 3024
RUEHGZ/AMCONSUL GUANGZHOU 0170
RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG 0476
RUEHGH/AMCONSUL SHANGHAI 2480
RUEHSH/AMCONSUL SHENYANG 6971
RHHJJAA/JICPAC HONOLULU HI
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RHHMUNA/USPACOM HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TAIPEI 000304

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/19/2019

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [CH](#) [TW](#)

SUBJECT: CHAIRMAN BURGHARDT AND DPP CHAIR TSAI DISCUSS
CROSS-STRAIT POLICY AND UPCOMING ELECTIONS

REF: 08 TAIPEI 1564

Classified By: AIT Acting Director Robert S. Wang,
Reasons: 1.4 (b/d)

11. (C) Summary: AIT Chairman Burghardt told DPP Chair Tsai Ing-wen on March 18 that the United States is pleased with President Ma Ying-jeou's efforts to improve cross-Straits ties. Tsai cautioned that DPP supporters are dissatisfied, believing Ma is moving too quickly and in a non-transparent way on cross-Straits ties. Consequently, domestic political tension is increasing. Tsai expressed some frustration that people outside Taiwan do not seem to understand the DPP point of view. On upcoming election campaigns, Tsai acknowledged there was good possibility former DPP Premier Su Tseng-chang might run in the crucial December contest for Taipei County magistrate, but explained that the party was in no hurry to name its candidate. Tsai plans to visit Washington in May as part of her party fundraising efforts. End Summary.

Tsai Criticizes Ma's Cross-Straits Policy

12. (C) AIT Chairman Ray Burghardt explained to DPP Chair Tsai Ing-wen on March 18 that he was visiting Taiwan to convey to President Ma and others that the Obama administration is pleased with the improvement in cross-Straits relations. Tsai responded that DPP supporters are "very uncomfortable" because they believe Ma is forging ties with China too fast and without any transparency. Burghardt questioned the DPP criticisms of Ma's initiatives, noting that the cross-Straits agreements signed last November (reftel) were conceived during President Chen Shui-bian's administration. DPP Special Advisor Bihim Hsiao said the party's supporters are wondering what type of concessions Ma may have made to Beijing to get the agreements inked. Tsai added that the DPP and its legislators have repeatedly asked the Ma administration for information on what kinds of meetings are being conducted with China and what is being discussed at those meetings. However, these questions have gone unanswered.

13. (C) Burghardt pointed out that we regard the resumption of cross-Straits dialogue and stability in Taiwan as good for the United States. Tsai argued that Ma has not explained why he is in such a rush to deepen ties with China. To bolster her claim that people do not trust the Ma administration, Tsai cited a March 11 TVBS (pro-Blue) poll that found 44 percent

of respondents did not deem the Ma administration capable of representing Taiwan people's interests in negotiations with China and 43 percent believed Ma was too sympathetic to China. According to Tsai, the high level of discomfort and anxiety experienced by the people would further divide society and increase tension in Taiwan and this in turn would harm U.S. longterm interests.

14. (C) Tsai criticized Ma for saying that Taiwan "must" sign an Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA) with China without providing a clear definition of the terms. Tsai said she would be more comfortable with the agreement if Ma secured Beijing's guarantee that it would not prevent Taiwan from signing free trade agreements with other countries.

15. (C) When the Director mentioned the idea of a dialogue between Tsai and Ma, Tsai quickly responded that there was "no point" in exchanging views with the President. DPP supporters do not trust Ma nor does she trust how he might spin a closed-door meeting, Tsai said, adding that Ma has ignored her offer to have a public debate. For now, the most effective way to communicate with Ma is to take to the streets, Tsai maintained.

Nominations Under Control But Need to Raise Money -----

16. (C) Tsai stressed the first priority in her work as party chair was to raise funds for DPP campaigns in the run-up to the December 5 city and county elections. She noted that this is an arduous task given the economic downturn and the

TAIPEI 00000304 002 OF 002

ongoing corruption cases involving Chen Shui-bian. As part of the fundraising effort, Tsai plans to travel to Washington DC in early May.

17. (C) Explaining that the DPP was in "no hurry" to announce its candidate for the Taipei County magistrate election in December, Tsai did acknowledge there was a "good possibility" the nod would go to former Premier Su Tseng-chang. Tsai insisted the party would make its own decisions on the December nominations and not "bother with the noises." (Comment: Tsai apparently was referring to the situation in Tainan County, where three people are competing for the DPP nomination. One potential candidate, former Presidential Office Secretary General Mark Chen, claimed this week that the DPP "would not be so stupid as to not appoint" him as the candidate.)

18. (C) Turning to the March 28 legislative by-election in Taipei's Da'an district, Tsai acknowledged that DPP candidate Chou Po-ya "does not stand a good chance." Da'an is the "deepest Blue" area in all of Taiwan, she explained.

Participants -----

19. (U) Participants in the meeting were Chair Tsai, Bikhim Hsiao, a DPP notetaker, Chairman Burghardt, Director Young, EAP/TC Director Ted Mann, and AIT Poloffs Darlene Liao and Deanna Kim.

110. (U) Chairman Burghardt did not have an opportunity to clear this message.
YOUNG